



For Immediate Release
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**Senate Floor Statement of Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.)
Regarding Economic Stimulus
(as prepared)**

The Book of Leviticus teaches: "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly, and revere your God."

Today, the Senate can show respect for America's elderly. Today, the Senate can extend needed stimulus checks to 20 million seniors whom the House left behind.

America's seniors have earned the right to get stimulus checks, every bit as much as other Americans. They worked hard all their lives. They paid a lifetime of taxes. They contribute to the economy.

And seniors can use the money. And because they can use the money, seniors are excellent targets for economic stimulus checks. Because they can use the money, they will spend it quickly.

Americans over age 65 spend 92 percent of their incomes. Households headed by a person over age 75 spend 98 percent. That's higher than any other group over the age of 25. And that means that a check sent to a senior will have a greater bang for the buck in terms of helping the economy.

The Finance Committee amendment would help 20 million seniors who were left out of the House bill. The Finance Committee amendment would provide seniors with rebate checks of \$500. The underlying House bill would not help those 20 million seniors.

And the Finance Committee amendment would also provide rebate checks for 250,000 disabled veterans who receive at least \$3,000 in non-taxable disability compensation. The Finance Committee amendment would make them eligible to receive the same \$500 rebate as wage earners and Social Security recipients. The Veterans Administration would distribute the rebate. The House bill would not provide rebate checks to disabled veterans who don't pay taxes.

And the Finance Committee amendment would provide an additional 13 weeks of unemployment insurance. And high unemployment states would qualify for an extra 13 weeks. The House bill does not provide an extension of unemployment insurance.

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Almost a million more Americans are unemployed today than were a year ago. And 69,000 additional unemployed workers filed claims for unemployment insurance just last week.

CBO found unemployment insurance to have a big bang-for-the-buck. It acts quickly to boost the economy. Economy.com found that each dollar spent on extended unemployment insurance benefits would generate \$1.64 in increased economic activity.

The bipartisan stimulus bill enacted after 9/11 contained an extension of unemployment insurance. President Bush signed that bill into law. We should extend unemployment insurance again.

And the Finance Committee amendment would extend the carry-back period for net operating losses — or NOLs — from two years to five years.

Generally, a cyclical business has profitable years followed by loss years. During a loss period, a company will carry back the net operating losses from the loss years to the prior profitable years. They will file a quick refund claim. The quick refund claim acts as a cash infusion that allows a company to survive a loss period.

The housing industry would greatly benefit from an increased NOL carry-back period. The expanded period would allow builders to avoid selling land and houses at distressed prices. And it would enable less-costly financing.

An increased NOL carry-back period would improve business conditions for the eventual return of the housing market. And the expanded period would give the housing industry cash to meet payroll. And that would limit additional job losses.

And there is the issue of illegal aliens. The Finance Committee amendment would bar illegal aliens from receiving checks. It would do so by requiring Social Security numbers for each rebate. The House bill does not contain this enforcement tool.

And so, let us rise to the occasion of helping America's aged. Let us show respect for the elderly, by treating them just like other Americans. And let us adopt the Finance Committee amendment.

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